



City of Missoula, Montana
Item to be Referred to City Council Committee

Committee: Administration and Finance

Item: Referral – Contract Approval for Emergency Winter Shelter

Date: September 21, 2021

Sponsor(s): Emily Armstrong

Prepared by: Emily Armstrong

Ward(s) Affected:

☐ Ward 1	☐ Ward 4
☐ Ward 2	☐ Ward 5
☐ Ward 3	☒ Ward 6
☐ All Wards	☐ N/A

Action Required:

Authorize the Mayor to sign and execute an agreement with The Poverello Center for the provision of Emergency Winter Shelter services funded by the City of Missoula.

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council: To authorize the Mayor to sign and execute an agreement with The Poverello Center for the provision of Emergency Winter Shelter services funded by the City of Missoula.

Timeline:

Referral to committee:	October 4, 2021
Committee discussion:	October 6, 2021
Council action (or sets hearing):	October 18, 2021
Public Hearing (if required):	N/A
Deadline:	October 18, 2021

Background and Alternatives Explored:

A planning group began gathering in March 2021 to consider plans for emergency winter shelter in anticipation of the '21-'22 Montana winter. Those meetings consisted of City Council, City staff, Poverello Center staff, and a County Commissioner. The group talked with a realtor and looked at various sites and options throughout Missoula for the upcoming winter shelter. The City also put out a community call for suggestions over the summer hoping that a community member may offer up an alternate option. The planning conversations and community call did not yield any viable options.

COVID-19 continues to present an issue for members of the Missoula community seeking warm shelter during the cold winter months. The unanticipated, continued presence of the pandemic, in combination with short supply of shelter and virtually zero rental vacancies, has spurred the City of Missoula and Missoula County to take action.

Last year, the City of Missoula established an expanded Emergency Winter Shelter Program at the Johnson Street Community Center with support from Missoula County. This was a temporary shelter that served up to 135 people each night during the winter months. It preserved hundreds of lives of individuals who otherwise may have frozen to death in bitter temperatures. The Poverello Center is turning people away each night due to capacity limits. Operating under COVID-19 precaution guidelines means they can safely provide shelter for a limited number of neighbors.

No one could have predicted the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it would have on our community. Though the 2020 emergency shelter was thought to be a temporary, one-year endeavor, the life-saving resources the Center provided last year were imperative to keeping individuals safe. This impact is undeniable.

This year, the City of Missoula, Missoula County, the Poverello Center and the Human Resource Council are again partnering to provide an emergency winter shelter program in the same location at 1919 North Ave. W.

The Poverello Center's trained, professional staff will operate the shelter from Nov. 1, 2021 through April 2022, as needs dictate. One hot meal will be served every day, with sack lunches available. The Johnson Street Center will be staffed around the clock. This year, a local security company will work to secure public safety in the area throughout the tenure of the program.

Neighbors can stay at the Johnson Street Center and the Poverello Center on West Broadway during both daytime and evening hours. This means that folks using the shelter have a safe, warm place to stay throughout the day and night. The staff at the Center will do all they can to be a good neighbor. This is a top priority.

The program, operated by the Poverello Center, is financed through allocations from the City of Missoula, Missoula County, and an Emergency Solutions Grant fund from the Human Resource Council. The total cost is approximately \$615,000, totaling all contributions.

We recognize that the presence of the center brought both successes and challenges to the community last year. We appreciate your understanding as we continue the program for a second year and know you'll likely have questions about this center, its operations and neighborhood impacts.

Financial Implications:

An allocation of \$311,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars was approved in the City of Missoula FY22 budget cycle for this item.

Links to external websites:

<https://www.engagemissoula.com/safe-shelter>

This site will be updated with more information on Emergency Winter Shelter in late September or early October.